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# REFLECTIONS

ON THE

## GOODNESS OF GOD,

IN SUPPORTING THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

THROUGH THE LATE WAR,

AND GIVING THEM SO ADVANTAGEOUS AND  
HONOURABLE A PEACE.

## A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL THANKSGIVING, ON  
THE 11th OF DECEMBER, 1783.

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BY DAVID OSGOOD, A.M.

Pastor of the Church in MEDFORD.

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WHOSO IS WISE, AND WILL OBSERVE THESE THINGS,  
EVEN THEY SHALL UNDERSTAND THE LOVING-  
KINDNESS OF THE LORD.

The PSALMIST.

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Here whoever admires the principle  
must approve of the Reflections as fit  
proper, and well expressed.

## REFLECTIONS, &c.

### PSALM LXV. II.

THOU CROWNEST THE YEAR WITH THY  
GOODNESS.

*My dear People,*

THOUGH this makes the tenth annual Thanksgiving since it has pleased God that I should be your Minister, to lead in your public devotions, and assist your meditations on his word and works; yet, I presume, you will agree with me, that it is the first in which the words of the Psalmist now read, with respect to our beloved Country, have their fullest completion. This year, above either of the preceding, is especially and illustriously crowned with the *goodness of God*,

Indeed, we have had occasion, at the close of each of the former years, to talk of his goodness. Not one of them hath passed without witnesses, many witnesses for him. In every revolving season we have beheld the displays of his goodness, and received multiplied testimonials of his providential care and kindness.

In no year, and at no time, has he ceased to do us good, *giving us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.*

In these respects, however, the present year vies with any of the preceding: The earth has been made soft with repeated and plentiful flowers; *the pastures have been clothed with flocks; and the vallies covered with corn.* We have received the former and the latter harvest in abundance; our granaries are filled with various store. Through the past season all the paths of the Lord have dropped marrow and fatness.

But I need not tell you that what signalizes, and will render memorable to the latest ages, as the brightest jewel in the crown of the present year, is *Peace*, an honourable and glorious peace for our country, with its attendant blessings. What advantage this most pleasing and joyful event gives to the present, above either of the preceding years, will appear on the slightest comparison.

We cannot have forgot what our feelings were at the prospect of the war which is now so happily terminated. The year 1774, in which I became connected with you, set this prospect full in our view. Though that year was crowned with the blessings of harvest and of health, yet it ended in a cloudy and threatening aspect upon our country.



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The dispute between Britain and America, which originated in the stamp act ten years before, was then drawing to a crisis. A system of tyranny had been concerted in the British cabinet and adopted by the government. *To bind us in all cases whatever*, was their declared purpose. To this they claimed unconditional submission on our part; insisting that we should hold life and property by no other tenure than their sovereign will and pleasure. To bring us to this, coercive measures were determined. The British Premier had boasted “that he would lay America prostrate at his feet.” War was in a sense levied in the violence and cruelty of the port-bill, the vacation of our charter, the change of our Government, and the arrival of fleets and armies to execute these unrighteous decrees.

On our part, preparation was making for the dernier resort. The flame of liberty kindled in our breasts, and catched from bosom to bosom till the whole country was in a glow.—The voice of patriotism was sounded forth and echoed through the Continent:—“Awake, “arouse, O Americans! Your petitions and “entreaties are no longer regarded:—Your “enemies are determined, and leave you no “other alternative but to chuse between fire “and sword and all the horrors of war, or the “yoke of perpetual bondage. Will you be  
free-

" freemen, or slaves! Your choice decides the fate of near three millions of people; and transmits happiness or misery to the unborn millions of your posterity." In a strain like this, you well remember, was the language of the day. And thus, on both sides, was "the sword whetting; combustibles were fast collecting; the conflagration was soon to blaze."

With what concern, with what painful anxiety, my brethren, did we behold these appearances? Were not our hearts ready to faint under the distressing apprehension of the calamities impending; while we saw the storm gathering, the cloud thick and heavy, black and charged with uncommon wrath, coming apace?

The succeeding year realized these terrors, and brought them home to our doors. In 1775, the tempest burst upon us with all its fury. We not only heard the sound of the trumpet and the alarm of war, but beheld its deadly and fatal effects, garments rolled in blood, and the habitations of our friends and neighbours wrapt in flames. With what consternation and affright did we hurry our families and effects from the scene of danger? And through the year, to what daily alarms were we liable while the enemy possessed our Capital, and held their strong holds in the neighbourhood? Our houses were turned into barracks and hospitals for soldiers. We

lived

lived in the midst of camps. Their stench and infection contributed, with the terror of the times, to that uncommon mortality which prevailed in this and the adjacent towns, and greatly increased the distresses of the year.

But the close of 1776 brought with it a scene of danger to America greater than she had ever before experienced. Our armies in *one* quarter, after repeated defeats, many hardships and misfortunes, had been driven out of Canada. In the *other*, the enemy carried all before them, till at length, our brave Chief with an handful of naked worn out troops, the shattered remains of a vanquished or disbanded army was forced to fly; while a victorious and triumphant foe was in close pursuit: and this, during a retreat of ninety miles. It was then, that "the fate of America stood trembling on the point of suspence." So critical was our situation, and so imminent the danger, that our escape was little short of a miracle. The noble and spirited exertions of our little army at Trenton and Princeton, the generalship displayed in these enterprizes, and the success with which they were attended, form a distinguished and brilliant page in the History of the War.

After various turns of fortune and some strange and untoward events, the close of 1777 brought with it a glorious triumph to the American

arms

arms in the capture of a whole host of enemies ; but even this triumph was qualified by ill success at the southward, a defeat at Brandywine, a repulse at Germantown, the flight of Congress, and the loss of the capital of America.

The year 1778 produced the glorious alliance with France, and placed our independence upon the shoulders of a great and powerful nation ; but in other respects it furnished no instance of very signal success. It closed with an ineffectual attempt to dispossess the enemy of Newport.

Our raised expectations of peace in 1779 were disappointed, and the flattering hopes we had entertained, vanished. That year proved fruitful of calamities. A predatory, distressing war raged throughout the Continent. This State sustained the heavy disaster at Penobscot ; seven towns in Connecticut were destroyed ; the enemy took possession of Georgia, and threatened the other southern States.

In 1780 our misfortunes multiplied apace, and after the loss of Charlestown, the defeat of General Gates at Camden, and the success of the enemy of over-running the southern States, our affairs seemed to be tottering on the brink of ruin. The dejection of the public was at no time greater than towards the close of that year. Our many losses, increased burdens, and

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the wretched state of our finances raised apprehensions in minds that had before been sanguine.

But 1781 gave another turn to our affairs, reversed the fortune of the war, and ended in another glorious triumph in the capture of Cornwallis, by the combined forces of France and America.

This wonderful success effected, in the following year, the downfall of that wicked set of Ministers in Britain, who first kindled the flames of war, and had hitherto, with a surprizing obstinacy, persisted in disturbing the peace not only of America but a great part of Europe. This change of men led us to expect a change of measures, and to hope that the dawn of peace was not far distant. This hope, however, was mingled with many fears, occasioned by the severe blow upon our allies in the West Indies and their misfortunes at Gibraltar. And though in America, there was no active campaign by land, yet by sea, the depredations on our trade continued, and were as great, if not greater than ever.

The prison ships of our enemies were filled with our unfortunate seamen, where they were exposed to suffocation and death by the stench and miseries of their confinement.

Through the whole course of the war, how were our feelings wounded, when we reflected on the cruelties inflicted upon multitudes of our

people shut up in those floating dungeons of infection and disease; of misery and despair! The accounts we have had of their sufferings, were enough to harrow every bosom susceptible of the feelings of humanity. Whose blood is not chilled at the recollection of a son, a brother, or a friend, thrust into those gloomy regions; where "no refreshing breezes entered;" where poisonous exhalations were continually drawn in, and "the tainted element was charged with pestilence and death!" How many thousands of our brethren have perished in the prisons of the enemy! and of those who escaped from them alive, what a large proportion escaped only to exhibit pining skeletons to their afflicted friends, specimens of the cruelties they have suffered; and then to fall victims to the disease they had brought with them from their confinement!

But, blessed be God! the scenes of misery and distress are now happily closed. Our work is done. The most complete and glorious revolution the world ever beheld, is accomplished. The storm of war is dissipated. The clouds are scattered—The years wherein we have seen evil, are rolled away. The present ushers in happier times, and restores peace to a bleeding world.

And do we live, my brethren, to behold this happy, this long desired day, this glorious event! Do we live to see our country free and independent,

dent, its sovereignty acknowledged even by those, whose rage to subdue us set the world in flames ! Do we behold the reluctant tyrant of Britain relinquishing for himself and his heirs for ever all claim to dominion over these States ? How many of our friends and neighbours *have desired to see the things which we see and have not seen them* ? How considerable a part of the inhabitants of this town have been added to the congregation of the dead since the sad contest began ? What gratitude to the great Lord of life, should you and I feel, for supporting us through all our private and public distresses, to behold this joyful conclusion, the year of our country's redemption !

When a quarrel is made up and passion is subsided, it becomes the parties who have been at variance, nations as well as individuals, seriously to reflect whether they were the culpable aggressors. For even success in an unjust cause, calls for mourning and repentance rather than for joy and thanksgiving. A widely extended desolation has been made, innumerable calamities produced, and many, many thousands of lives sacrificed in the late contest : Their blood still *crieth from the ground*. That it doth not cry against our country, is surely a most pleasing reflection, a circumstance which greatly heightens the joy of the present occasion.

“ Heaven and Earth,” said a celebrated divine

on a memorable occasion \*; "Heaven and earth  
 " can bear witness that these States are innocent  
 " of the blood that hath been shed, and  
 " the miseries diffused by this unrighteous war.  
 " We have stood upon the ground of justice,  
 " honour, and liberty, and acted merely a defensive part. Not unreasonable in our demands, not violent in our councils, not precipitate in our conduct, our moderation has been known to all men; and without refusing a single claim that Britain could in equity make upon us, our persons, our property, our rights have been invaded in every step that led to this revolution.—Upon our present independence, sweet and valuable as the blessing is, we may read the inscription, "*I am found of them that sought me not.*"

It was not from a spirit of sedition, it was not from pride or caprice, that we aspired to sovereignty. The nation that claimed to be the mother-country, with her own hands, violently broke every bond of union between us; and by her oppression and unrelenting cruelty, thrust us out from the family of which we once were a part. And when, with supplicating hands, we begged to be restored, only on condition of enjoying equal privileges with the other members, she, with a provoking insolence, refused us a hearing, and answered only at the mouth of her cannon.

\* Dr. COOPER at the Commencement of the Constitution.

cannon. Witness the fate of the petitions of Congress to the King, and their addresses to the people of England in the years 1774 and 1775. The manner in which those manly, yet decent and respectful applications were rejected, will remain to all ages a proof of the pride, injustice and cruelty of our late enemies, and of the necessity we were under of a final separation from them. In the strong language of the Author of Common Sense, "the most unoffending humility was tortured into rage, and the infancy of existence made to weep."

It was the cruel wrongs we sustained that brought the Continent to unite in that act which gave us rank among the nations of the world. And how far these nations were from grudging us the distinction, or from condemning our measures, soon appeared in the countenance they gave us, in their universal good wishes towards us, and in the signal aid which many of them afforded us. And even from Britain herself, from some of her wisest and best men, we have had, from the beginning, many strong testimonials to the justice of our cause. You may find them in numbers of their most ingenious publications, and in a multitude of parliamentary speeches and protests.

But the approbation of the whole world is not so satisfying as that of our own consciences. Deeply as we regret the manifold and long continued

tinued calamities of the late war, yet, upon an impartial review of the part we have acted, we are confident, that the guilt of them does not lie at our door; that the *woe* denounced against those *by whom offences come*, does not hang over *us*. From the principles both of reason and scripture we were assured that our cause was just and righteous, and such as we could, with a clear conscience and in the exercise of faith, heartily recommend to the God of Justice, and implore his providence to bless and prosper. To *Him* we made our solemn appeal, and sent up our earnest cries. Besides many days of prayer set apart by authority during the course of our long struggle, innumerable fervent petitions were, every day, going up to heaven for success: The praying people in general through the land made it a part of their daily addresses to the throne of grace. Nor did they pray in vain. The irreligious and unbelieving may laugh; but, the scorn of infidels be to themselves; our prayers were heard in heaven. And God hath done for us equal and above what we could ask or think, both in supporting us in the day of our distress, and in his own good time, putting a period to our trials, and bringing us, out of the furnace of affliction. It becomes *us*, therefore, on this day, to pay our vows to the Lord, and offer him the sacrifice of thanksgiving.

What

What a glow of love and gratitude should we feel for the support, protection and success vouchsafed us through the various perils and vicissitudes of the war! We cannot reflect upon our defenceless situation when this judgment befell us, without adoring the divine goodness that it did not prove our speedy and entire ruin. No people perhaps were ever taken at greater disadvantages, and under worse circumstances to defend themselves against so powerful an invasion. Unknown to, and unconnected with, any foreign power, vulnerable on all sides—our trade the prey of the enemy's cruisers, our sea-ports and the whole length of our coast exposed to their continual insults—our frontiers naked and open to the barbarous desolation of savages from the wilderness, which British cruelty had stirred up against us, liable to internal division—several provinces swarming with secret enemies and traitors ever busy in disconcerting every measure taken for the common safety—at the same time, destitute of all kinds of military stores, of every thing that "could promise success in war," we had no other rational dependance but the justice of our cause and the protection of heaven, while contending with the most formidable nation in the world; whose fleet ruled the ocean, and whose troops had been used to victory and conquest, and to spread terror wherever they approach.

proached. So unequal was the the contest, that our enemies were confident of victory, and laughed at the idea of disappointment.

But what great things has God done for us ! While for our sins we have been suffering the chastisement of his justice, we have yet seen this justice so lenient, so restrained and tempered with compassion, that it has evidently appeared to be *his strange works*. In the midst of judgment, what goodness have we all along experienced ; and how wonderfully has mercy triumphed over our ill deserts !

Many signal instances of God's goodness have been already recounted : Many more must be still fresh in your memories. To his all pervading influence must we gratefully ascribe it, that the people of these States were inspired with such a sense of the worth of liberty as disposed them to unite in vigorous exertions to obtain it ; that their minds, through all the vicissitudes of the war, were held steady in the pursuit of the great object of it ; that a martial spirit was diffused among their sons—that such numbers offered themselves for their country's defence ; that from materials so raw, an army brave, determined and faithful, was formed ; that this army has been animated to endure the uncommon hardships of the service with an unexampled patience, to exhibit instances of the noblest courage, and to reap laurels that have astonished the world.

But

But the gracious interposition, of providence have been especially conspicuous in seasonably detecting dangerous plots, and conspiracies,\* furnishing supplies when we were in the greatest straits, repeatedly wafting into our ports those that were coming to our enemies, giving us the fruits of the victories they have gained, by turning, in almost every signal instance of it, their success against themselves, and in bringing one European nation after another to espouse our cause and fight our battles; by whose assistance peace is at length obtained.

With what holy joy should we praise the divine goodness for this inestimable blessing, and for bringing about a peace so highly advantageous and honourable to our country ! The Egyptian Pharaoh was not more loth to part with his Hebrew slaves, than the British court to give up their once American subjects. By a series of miracles were the Israelites rescued from the house of bondage. And by a series of providential wonder, have the Americans emerged from oppression, and risen to liberty and independence. That the spirit of at once the haughtiest and the most powerful nation in the world should, in the course of a few years, be

\* Nothing could more pointedly mark the watchful care of Heaven for the preservation of these infant States, than the manner of bringing to light, at so critical a juncture, the dark treachery and deep laid plot of the *infamous Arnold*.

so humbled as to consent to the dismemberment of her empire, and give her own sanction to the blow that lopped off thirteen flourishing provinces, is surely the *Lord's doing*, and may well be *marvellous in our eyes.*

In other respects, the terms of pacification are greatly in our favour. It was not without reason that many of our wise men feared that, at the conclusion of the war, though our independence should be obtained, yet it would be limited to the territory we already possessed; that these northern states, deprived of the *fishery*, so important to our commercial interests, would be in danger of sinking into poverty and insignificance; and to complete the mortification, would be obliged to refund the confiscated estates of those who have sided with the enemy. But, thanks be to God, and under him, to those able and faithful negotiators by whose influence and management, we have attained our utmost wishes in each of these important articles. Indeed, we have, what rarely happens to any nation, such a peace as seems to be universally satisfactory to the friends of America.

What a further call is this upon our gratitude? How thankful should we be for the present pleasing prospects before us! Had the contest ended in our subjugation, in the accomplishment of the designs of our late enemies against us; gracious heaven! what matter for

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horrible description would such an event have furnished? A flourishing country ruined; its young men dead in battle; its old men drooping under inconsolable grief; widows and fatherless children multiplied in abundance—and all exposed to the injuries and insults of a victorious, haughty and unrelenting enemy; its worthiest patriots and bravest heroes destined to the ax and to the halter; its base betrayers swarming back, with an insufferable insolence, to exult over their vanquished brethren, and riot in their forfeited possessions; its clergy driven into corners, silenced, or harrassed with prosecutions, under pretence of their having been fomenters of the late rebellion; its schools and seminaries of learning frowned upon, as nurseries of sedition; measures taken to let the people sink into ignorance and superstition, that they might the more patiently bear the yoke of slavery;—all the affairs of the country so conducted as to be rendered subservient only to the interests of the conquerors—that the minions and dependants of the court might reap the fruits of honest industry: an army of foreigners, maintained at the expence of the inhabitants, in possession of all the fortified posts, to keep the country in awe, and execute the decrees of a tyrant.—Laws and regulations made, all calculated to extinguish any remaining sparks of liberty, to render the

minds of the people abject and slavish, to cramp a spirit of enterprize, and prevent the cultivation of arts, manufactures and knowledge; the landed property parcelled out among the favourites of the court, and the former possessors made tenants of what they were once the owners!—Say not, that Britons were incapable of such injustice. The scenes of misery and cruelty which have marked the progress of their arms through every campaign, and been invariably exhibited, wherever they have made but a temporary conquest, leave us no room to doubt what scope they would have given to their vindictive resentment, had their power been equal to their malice, and success answered their wishes. At this moment, you might have seen your possessions in the hands of strangers, yourselves and children reduced to the condition of slaves, the chains rivetted upon you and no possible method left to throw them off—The spirit of the country humbled and subdued, we might have been obliged to behold the cruelty, lust and brutality of lawless power, to hear the groans of the oppressed, to see the tears of the afflicted, and feel our own miseries without daring to complain.

That during the late struggle, we have been in danger of the horrors of such a conclusion, we cannot deny. That our offences against heaven would have vindicated the divine justice

tice in bringing them upon us, we must also acknowledge. But mercy is the darling attribute of the Deity. He hath *no pleasure in the death of sinners.* He delights in being the patron of the oppressed. Our necessity was his opportunity. To him who is abundant in mercy and goodness, are we indebted for the present delightful contrast to this picture of horror! To him are we indebted, that our late distresses have not proved the agonies of dissolution and death, but the pangs of a joyful birth, of national existence! Thro' the divine goodness we may accommodate to our country the language of the prophet, and say, Behold! *a nation hath been born in a day!—who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things?—For as soon as America travailed, she brought forth.—Rejoice and be glad with her, all ye who love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye who mourned for her.*

Heaven has carried us through the gloomy wilderness of trouble, and at length raised us to a delightful eminence where we look around, and on every side a pleasing prospect opens before us. On the one part, *we suck the abundance of the sea, and of the treasures hid in the sand:* We have many hundred leagues of sea coast for the advantages of trade. No longer confined to one market, our commerce receives an unbounded extension. The ports of all nations are open for the welcome reception of our flag;

and

and the various treasures of the globe present themselves as the objects of our traffick.

And on the other part, we have nearly all the climates in the world, an immense extent of territory for new settlements and to serve the purposes of population. We are become the proprietors, the sovereigns of a vast continent sufficient to afford ample means of subsistence to many, many millions of people. At present we are but beginning to take possession of our inheritance; but a small part of it is under cultivation. Human labour and art have as yet done but little towards subduing and polishing this new world. Immense tracts of fertile soil still remain in that state of wilderness in which nature hath left them, covered with vast forests, the dark retreats of savage beasts and savage men. Every year however enlarges the bounds of improvement, and extends our settlements. And how rapid, we may suppose, will be their future increase! Wise and just political institutions, a free and happy government will encourage that industry which turns *the wilderness into a fruitful field*, and causes *the desert to blossom as a rose*. Such a government too, will nourish a spirit of enterprise and the improvement of all those arts which tend to sweeten and adorn human life: It will open and expand the mind, inspire it with a sense of dignity, and with an abhorrence of those mean and base vices which

servility

fervility engenders; it will watch over the manners of the people, and cherish and strengthen the social virtues by all the aid which human laws and authority can give. And adored by the divine goodness, by the late revolution, such a government is now our boast and glory. It is this that endears to us our country. "For what is our country? It is a soil of which, tho' we may be the present possessors, we can call no part our own? or the air in which we first drew our breath, from which we may be confined in a dungeon—at the pleasure of a tyrant? Is not a country a constitution—an established frame of laws; of which a man may say, "We are here united in society for our common security and happiness. These fields and these fruits are my own: The regulations under which I live are my own; I am not only a proprietor in the soil, but am part of the sovereignty of my country."—In such an attitude human nature appears with its proper dignity: On such a basis, life, and all that sweetens and adorns it, may rest with as much security as human imperfection can possibly admit. Such are the inestimable blessings and privileges of Independence and of our present happy Constitution, and all the fruit of our late struggle.

It becomes us then, my brethren, on this day to adore the wisdom as well as goodness of the Ruler of the world in bringing *good* out of *evil*,

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and causing *the wrath of man to praise him*. Wonderful are the disposals of Providence in so directing the course of events as to take *the wise in their own craftiness, and carry the counsel of the froward headlong*. Shall we not admire that divine superintendence which makes the unruly passions of the wicked instrumental not only to the subversion of their designs, but to the bringing about events the most contrary to their views and wishes? The cruelty of Joseph's brethren made way for that advancement of *him* above *them*, which it was intended to prevent. Haman's plot to ruin Mordecai, and extirpate his people, was over-ruled to bring about the pre-ferment of the *one*, and the triumph of the *other* over all their enemies. Pharoah, by increasing their burdens, hastened the emancipation of the Israelites. And thus Britain, by her injustice and cruelty in attempting to enslave America, has established our freedom and independence. I have ever been inclined to think with one of our political writers, that it was, in the beginning, the intention (not of the nation but) of the individuals who composed the British cabinet, *to quarrel with America at all events*. They had no doubt of success, if they could once bring it to the issue of a battle; and they expected from conquest, what they could neither propose with decency nor hope for by negotiation. The whole trouble of government would

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have ceased in a victory, and a final end been put to remonstrance and debate.—They hoped for a rebellion, and they made one. They expected a declaration of independence, and they were not disappointed. But after this, they looked for victory, and obtained a defeat.” They meant to lay us prostrate under them, but heaven has given us a triumph over them. They were *snared in the works of their own hands*—and *their own wickedness has corrected them*. Through the whole, they have been the unconscious ministers of the Almighty in hastening on a revolution which was most opposite to their views and intentions, which all their exertions were intended to prevent; but which notwithstanding, would not and probably could not for many years yet to come, have been effected, had it not have been for the injustice and cruelty of those exertions. Thus the gracious purposes of heaven are established on the ruin of the wicked devices of men. *Alleluia! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. He giveth strength and victory to his people; he cloatheth them with salvation.*

In other respects heaven has made the late contest the occasion of *good*. It has furnished an opportunity for mankind to show themselves. While it has exposed the vices of the wicked, it has improved and signalized the virtues of the good. It has made room for some of the noblest

exertions of the human mind, called forth the latent powers of the soul and displayed them to public view. It has given occasion for the trial and exercise of the suffering graces. And how many bright examples of fortitude, constancy, patience and perseverance in a just cause has it produced? What an illustrious band of patriots and heroes has it formed, called forth and exhibited upon the theatre of the world—names and characters which would otherwise never have been known, but are now admired as *the lights of the world*, and rendered immortal in the annals of fame?

We regret the thousands who fell in the struggle, and whose blood was the price of what we now enjoy: But many even of *their* names derive a lustre from the cause in which they suffered, that will be lasting as time—laurels that will never wither. “Liberty wept over their tombs,” and they are embalmed in the memory of her grateful sons. Form, says the Abbe Raynal, a political calander, marking each day by the name of some hero, who has spilt his blood to set you free. Your posterity shall one day read them with joy: These, shall it say, behold, these were the men who gave liberty to half a world; and who, charging themselves with our happiness, before we had existence saved our infant slumbers from being disturbed and terrified by the clank of chains.”

The price at which we have purchased free-

dom

dom has struck attentive nations with surprise, and put many of them upon considering its value. Oppressed Ireland has seized the opportunity, and already thrown off the yoke. Our success is an encouragement to all who sigh for liberty, and an alarm to tyrants through the world. Millions of slaves in Europe will fare the better, and be treated with more moderation and lenity, in consequence of the revolution in America. We know not to what distant countries and distant ages the happy effects of this great event may reach. The blood and treasure expended by us, will not be ill laid out, if they are the means of diffusing light and liberty in the world.—But still we blush for the dishonour and depravity of human nature, that such means are so frequently necessary to secure the rights of mankind and lay the basis of social happiness. What sad work do the unruly passions of men make in the world ? How fatal are the effects of pride, ambition, avarice and revenge ! Alas ! what has Britain got by all that train of calamities she has occasioned to the inhabitants on both sides of the Atlantic?—disgrace to her arms, destruction to her people, and the dismemberment of her empire, with the addition of a hundred millions to her debt, and the guilt of all the evils and miseries she has so constantly produced. God grant, that these things may prove a lesson to princes and statesmen, and render them more cautious how they invade

the rights of their brethren and neighbours ! Let us, my hearers, on this occasion, make it our earnest prayer to Heaven, that more just and equitable, more wise and benevolent counsels may prevail among those who guide the affairs of states and nations. At the same time, let it be our care to guard against the motions and impulse of those passions and lusts in ourselves which are productive of such dreadful and fatal effects. We should not only stand at the greatest distance from these, but it is a matter of the highest concern, and what I would earnestly recommend.

That in our respective places and stations we exert our utmost influence to cultivate peace and union among ourselves, and cherish all those virtues which tend to national strength, honour and prosperity. Since the settlement of his own favoured nation in Canaan, providence has given to no people a fairer opportunity to secure national felicity, than is now held forth to us. These united States have come into existence at a time when the quality of liberty, and the rights of human nature are defined and understood : We have had the Wisdom and experience of all former ages together with the discoveries of the present, to direct us in laying the foundations of our Republic. The eyes of the world are now turned upon us, to see in what manner we rear the superstructure, and what use we make of that liberty we have been so earnest

to obtain. *With us* it lies to give an example, whether mankind are capable of freedom ! Whether the justice, good faith, peace and happiness of the Community are safer and best promoted; when the power is ultimately lodged in the hands of the people, or when it resides in a Master over them ? A moment's reflection will render it sufficiently obvious, that where all power is derived from the people, every thing must depend upon their knowledge and virtue. If they are ignorant and vicious, abandoned to idleness, pride and extravagance ; if they are selfish and fraudulent, disorderly and factious, impious towards God and unjust and injurious towards one another—all must be anarchy and confusion, riot and licentiousness, where such a people hold the powers of government. There is no monarchy that is not preferable to such a Republic : There is no tyranny that is not more tolerable than such a pretended liberty.

It has often been said, that *virtue is the spirit of a republic*, and essential to the preservation of freedom. God forbid then, that by vice and irreligion, we should throw away the blessings and privileges which have been so dearly purchased. Let us guard against the allurements to pride and a vain parade, against a taste for luxury and pleasurable expence ; for these not only enervate the mind, but eat out the vitals of the state. All acts of private and public injustice, all breaches

ches of faith and use of deceitful and fraudulent arts, are also to be guarded against ; for these engender murmurings and complaints, divisions and animosities.

Let it be our care, to live by those rules of prudence and good œconomy which tend to the general weal. Let us cherish the virtues of temperance, frugality, industry and a public spirit. Let these things be *especially* inculcated upon the rising generation. There cannot be too much care and attention paid to the education of youth ; that their hands may be early inured to the practice of the useful arts of life, their minds furnished with useful knowledge, and their tempers formed to early habits of virtue and piety.

And let it be the endeavour of us all, each one for himself, and so far as his influence extends, for others too, that all *may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all goodness and honesty*, diligently and uniformly practising that *righteousness which exalteth a nation*. Let us, my brethren, become real and sincere *Christians*. Vital christianity will secure and hold us steady in a course of right conduct to promote our own and the public welfare. We wear the christian name, but that we might have the *thing itself*, is the end aimed at by providence in all its dealings with us. For *this*, we have, in times past, been *held in the cords of affliction* ; for *this*, we are now drawn *by the bands of love*. That our hearts might be humbled and broken in contrition and repentance, we

have, in former years, *seen evil*: and that they might be softened and melted into love and obedience to God our Saviour, the present year is *crowned with his goodness*. If it has not this effect, consequences more terrible and alarming are to be dreaded, than the mere loss of our liberties as a people, or of our temporal happiness and prosperity as individuals. Our interest in the events of the present life is comparatively small and trifling. We have but a transitory abode on earth, a short add precarious connection with the present world. Time is swiftly bearing us on to the point of a final and everlasting adieu to all the objects and concerns which now so much engross our thoughts and so strongly agitate our hopes and fears. Soon shall we meet that destined period when all will vanish as a phantom and seem as an idle dream. Nothing will then remain with, or accompany us, but the anguish and remorse, or the satisfaction and comfort resulting from the consciousness of a well, or ill improvement of our present advantages, opportunities and mercies.

May God Almighty, whose arm hath done great things for us, and whose goodness not only annually but *daily loadeth us with benefits*, add to the blessings of his providence, the gifts of his grace, and pour out his spirit in plentiful effusions upon each one of us, upon the people of this, and of all the United States, and dispose us universally to the love and practice of that

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holy religion which breathes *peace on earth, and good will towards men!* May he bless and reward those brave men who have jeopardized their lives in the defence of our rights; and incline the hearts of a grateful country to do them ample justice! May He shower his blessings upon those princes and nations who have generously espoused our cause, and by whose aid we have obtained liberty, independence and peace: in return for assisting us to civil liberty, may He bless them with spiritual freedom, with the full enjoyment of *the glorious liberty of the sons of God!* May He even bless our late enemies in turning them from all their iniquities, pardoning the wrongs they have committed against us, and against the rights of human nature, restoring them to their former glory and prosperity, and making them again a happy nation! May He take these United States into his holy protection, perfect and establish their union restore their credit, truth and justice, compleat their Prosperity, making them the asylum of liberty, the nursery of arts and knowledge, and (above all) of unfeigned christian piety; that through successive ages they may continue to be distinguished by his favour and guardianship, *as the glory of all lands, and the joy of the whole earth!*

—And let all the people say, AMEN.



F E N I S.

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